



Small Business Thrival Guide



Supporting community and commerce in times of uncertainty

The world around us is changing — faster than most of us anticipated.

At SiteCrafting, we know COVID-19 is challenging businesses as leaders are asked to make complex decisions to keep workers and communities safe while moving business forward.

That's why our team is actively working to develop ways people in our community can continue to connect with your business online. We are here to help you stay open and profitable during this unprecedented and unpredictable time.

Our headquarters are in Tacoma, a vibrant and diverse community. Small businesses are essential to our future. We want the South Sound to remain vibrant after COVID-19. We need businesses to be here when it's over and we're in for the fight with you.

Our team created this Thrival Guide because we want businesses to be able to do more than survive the current challenges — we want you to thrive. We hope this helps boost your spirits and your business.

In this together,



Brian Forth
Founder
SiteCrafting, Inc.

Stay connected with your customers

Are you feeling overwhelmed? Unsure of what to post and how to keep your community connected with your business? We understand.

Here are some ideas to jumpstart your thinking so you can meet your customers where they are.

- ❑ **Update your website and offers.** Make sure the information on your site is current with your contact information, hours and offerings. Don't have a website? Build one using template-based website builders such as Wix, Squarespace, and Weebly.
- ❑ **Get social and stay social.** Orders to stay at home mean that people are more active on social media, right? Don't be shy. Share about how your business is doing, how you're shifting your products and services, and what your plan is.
- ❑ **Repurpose and share content for your customers.** Do you have content you've produced in the past that is relevant to the many people who are new to the world of digital business? Repurpose and repost it.
- ❑ **Think about setting up online shopping carts.** Many website builders can connect with shopping cart apps (e.g., Shopify, Big Cartel). A shopping cart feature can also give you customer information so you can connect with them in the future (hello, email lists and targeted social ads).
- ❑ **Communicate how people can spend money with you.** Are you taking orders and payment by phone? Do you have an online shop? Are you promoting items on Instagram and emailing invoices? However you choose, make sure your customers know about it. And tell them often.
- ❑ **Tell people how you are working through the crisis.** Do you have new cleaning routines in place in your restaurant? How are you packing orders for delivery? Share that with your customers — on your website, social and in a printed note.
- ❑ **Embrace email.** Don't have an email list? Now's the time to build one. Email lists allow you to directly communicate with your customers. Social algorithms don't guarantee that anyone is seeing your latest menu item or clothing restock — an email does.

Stay connected with your community

During times of disruption, social media is a powerful tool for keeping your customers informed and engaged. We love a solid social media strategy. However, right now our recommendation is to post, share and repeat. Pick your favorite channel and start posting. Here are a few ideas and starters:

- ❑ **Be authentic. Your customers want to hear from you.** They care about you and they want honest updates about you and your business. How are you taking and fulfilling orders? How are you feeling? Emojis encouraged.
- ❑ **Share behind-the-scenes content.** Your doors may be closed to customers but social media is open for storytelling. Post an Instagram story of your team roasting coffee beans. Ask a member of your crew to share a Facebook Live from the kitchen. Post photos of your new order fulfillment and pickup process. Share photos of your dogs and cats.
- ❑ **Spread sunshine.** What are some take-aways or perspective shifts you're gaining from this experience? Any gratitude or shout-outs to customers that you want to share? Regram your favorite content or make a book recommendation. Participate in a pushup challenge or start a challenge of your own.
- ❑ **Engage with other businesses and organizations.** We're all in this together. Liking, commenting and sharing content from other accounts in your community can help us feel more connected.
- ❑ **Tell your customers how they can support you.** Share all of the ways that people can support your business. Is it by ordering products/services directly from your website? Purchasing gift cards? Ask your community to like, comment, share, and review your business on your social, website, and third-party review websites such as Yelp.
- ❑ **Give people something positive to think about.** What valuable insight, tips and tricks can you share with your customers? If you're a small clothing boutique, think about posting outfit ideas or styling tips. If you are a gift shop, consider creating a "Mother's Day gift guide." If you're a restaurant, share your best food and drink pairings.
- ❑ **Want to create pretty graphics for your social posts?** You don't need Photoshop, use a free app on your phone. We like Canva and Adobe Spark.

Digital Marketing Tips

Q: Why are digital marketers good actors?

A: They nail impressions.

Jokes aside, digital marketing is serious business. It's search engine optimization, social media strategy, content marketing, reporting, design, email (and more). It can feel like a big lift, especially in times of crisis. Here are some things you can do to communicate and thrive using your digital channels.

Review your content

- ❑ **Make sure you've verified your business on Google My Business.** A Google My Business account makes it easy to reach your customers through Google search and maps. Add your business contact information, hours of operation, and photos to help your business stand out.
- ❑ **Ask for reviews.** Your customers are likely spending more time online, ask them to take a few moments to leave a review for your business.
- ❑ **Review the title tags on your website.** Title tags (or page titles) are the first things that search engines look at to determine what type of information is on your website. Title tags should be 55 - 65 characters long and should be clear and descriptive. Instead of a title tag that is "About Us," try being more descriptive "Our 22 Year History - Learn About Us"
- ❑ **Look over the content on your website** and make sure it's up-to-date and relevant. Take this time to delete old or outdated information as well.

Other ideas for generating content

- ❑ **Use Google Analytics to help generate content ideas.** Google Analytics provides tracking and in-depth detail about how customers are interacting with your website. Take a look at which pages are most visited and create content to drive traffic from your social channels to those pages. Don't have Google Analytics? Set up a free account!
- ❑ **Do some competitive analysis.** Take a look at the websites and social channels of competitors or similar businesses. What are they doing well? Take those ideas and figure out how to make it work for you.
- ❑ **Think of commonly asked questions from your customers.** Answer those questions in a post on your social channels.

Taking action

“Your focus determines your reality.”

– Qui-Gon Jinn (The Phantom Menace)

Goals provide focus and help us take action. We created these questions to help you discover ways to stay connected with your business in meaningful and measurable ways.

1. What do your customers need from you right now?

ex. My customers need to be able to shop with us online.

2. What’s the one thing you want people to know about your business?

ex. I want them to know the best way to support my store is to keep shopping.

3. What can you do right now that will benefit your business once this is over?

ex. I can set up a business profile on Google.

How can you turn the answers to these questions into action?

ex. Actions can include setting up an online shopping cart, posting products and discount codes on Instagram and sending weekly emails with tips and updates about what people can do to support our local business community.

In closing,

It is an extraordinary time for our community, our state and our nation. We're facing unexpected challenges together. I hope this guide helps you thrive through the uncertainty.

You have a business, and that is worth fighting for. If there's anything my team can do to help, please let me know.

Stay safe, take care of others and yourself,



Brian Forth

bforth@sitecrafting.com

252-272-2248